Production and demand of foodgrains

3061. SHRI BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether population is growing faster than the production of foodgrains in the country;

(b) if so, the steps taken to meet foodgrain demand beside keeping its prices in control;

(c) the present status of production and consumption of foodgrains and for how many months will the present holding of foodgrains last; and

(d) the measures taken to meet the gap between demand and supply?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The average growth of estimated production of foodgrains in the country during 2004-05 to 2008-09 has been 1.98%, which is higher than the average rate of growth of 1.50% in the population of the country during the same period. However, the Government has taken following major steps to control the prices of foodgrains in the country:—

- Reduction of import duty to zero for wheat, pulses, edible oils (crude) and maize.
- Cap of 15 million tones on export of wheat and wheat products ***w.e.f.*** 15th May, 2009.
- Cap of 20 lakh tones on export of rice on diplomatic basis to friendly countries ***w.e.f.*** Kharif Marketing Season 2008-09.
- Ban on export of non-basmati rice, wheat and pulses (except kabuli chana).
- Imposition of stock limit orders for paddy, rice and pulses.
- Incentivization on higher production through enhancement in the minimum support price of wheat and rice.
- Reimbursement of loses by the Government to Public Sector Undertaking permitted to import pulses to augment its availability.

(c) Based on the behaviourstic approach, the total demand of foodgrains for 2008-09 has been estimated at 219.01 million tones against estimated production of 233.88 million tones (4th advance estimates released on 21.07.2009).

As regards stock position, inflow and outflow of stocks in Central Pool is a continuous process all over the year. Stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool are formed by the quantities of rice, wheat and coarse grains procured during the Kharif and Rabi procurement years. The stocks on 01.07.2009 were 196.16 lakh tonnes of rice, 329.22 lakh tones of wheat and 6.45 lakh tones of coarse grains. The present monthly allocations of rice and wheat under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes are 23.21 lakh tones of rice and 18.34 lakh tones of wheat.

(d) In order to further increase production of foodgrains in the country, the Government of India is implementing the following schemes:—

- National Food Security Mission (NFSM) launched in November, 2007 aims at increasing the production of rice by 10 million tones, wheat by 8 million tones and pulses by 2 million tones by the end of the Eleventh Plan, *i.e.* by 2011-12 through area increase and productivity enhancement in targeted districts.

- A Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize" (ISOPOM) is being implemented since 01.04.2004.

- Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Rice Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Rice), Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Wheat Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Wheat) and Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Coarse Cereals Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Coarse Cereals)" subsumed under Macro Management Mode of Agriculture with effect from October, 2000 are under implementation to provide more flexibility to States based on local needs.

- The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) launched in 2007 aims to incentivise the States to increase investment in agriculture and allied sector.

Maximum export price for onion

3062. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Maharashtra has brought out that the present system of fixing the maximum export price by NAFED is causing considerable difficulty to the onion producers as also causing loss of export trade for the country;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in taking a decision in the matter; and

(c) whether Government will decide it before the arrival of Kharif onion crops this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) There is no proposal from Government of Maharashtra to review fixing of maximum export price of Onion. However, Government of Maharashtra has requested to modify existing Minimum Export Price (MEP) procedure regarding export of Onion and to remove Minimum Export Price. Minimum Export Price (MEP) for export of onions for different varieties is fixed by NAFED every month in consultation with the representatives of Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs, Agriculture, State Trading Enterprises (STE) and Association shippers. As and when the prices in domestic market rises, MEP is increased to restrict export of onion to improve